

# S. D. Union Reporter Tells Of Hunt For Beria

Editor's Note: Here, for the first time, is the detailed story of the manhunt in Spain for a man supposed to be Lavrenti Beria of Russia, and how the Spanish secret police spent weeks checking the story and trying to prove it a hoax or whether it had some grain of truth.

By GENE FUSON

Gray streaks of soggy dawn uncovered a Paris of naked trees and empty streets Sept. 21, a little more than 24 hours before I was scheduled to rendezvous in Spain with the man who claimed to be Lavrenti Beria.

I wasn't thinking magnificent thoughts about world-shaking consequences if I could bring in a 1000-to-1 shot and take Stalin's butcher and his secrets to the United States.

I was two other things: worried and scared.

A huge workhorse clopped over wet cobbles in front of the Restaurant Palais D'Orsay where I was the only customer. He pulled a load of cabbages. Cabbages, I thought, just what the little package of papers I carried felt like... a couple of cabbages.

## PAPEERS FROM MCCARTHY

The papers were documents signed by Sen. McCarthy (R-Wis) that I was to attempt to deliver to the man who claimed to be Beria. They would guarantee his conditions of surrender to the United States would be met, that McCarthy would conduct him and his two companions to the United States.

The intermediary, Fabio Gallo, 24, a wealthy Nicaraguan coffee planter, had delivered all the information over an eight-week period.

## FULL SECRECY REQUIRED

Gallo claimed he had instructions to arrange political asylum in the U.S. for a "big fish." He said the man was Beria's second assistant, a Spaniard; accompanied by a Russian atomic physicist and another man, all hiding in Spain, and they would surrender under certain terms. Gallo and I delivered the terms to Washington as instructed.

They were:  
1. Under no circumstances were the U.S. State Department or the Central Intelligence Agency to be informed of the case, or the deal was off.

2. We were to deal directly with J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI only.

3. The negotiation was to be handled in absolute secrecy.

4. Gallo was to be the only man with whom they would maintain contact.

5. The four fugitives were to be delivered directly to the FBI and held incommunicado under guard until their information was proven true or false.

6. If their information proved true, all would receive permanent political asylum. If proven false, they would be returned in secret to a place of their own choosing.

7. They would be allowed to keep a fortune in American currency they would bring with them.

8. If refused asylum, they would keep two valises of documents they would bring with them.

9. Their presence in the United States would remain a secret.

10. They wanted a written guarantee, signed by the President or other high officials, that their surrender conditions would be observed.

## INVASION PLANS OFFERED

In return they guaranteed to deliver:

1. Details of Soviet invasion plans for Western Europe.

2. Names and data on all Soviet agents working in the U.S. State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency.

3. Full names and data of members of the Soviet atomic spy ring in the U.S., to include the names of the bosses of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

4. Bank receipts for 2½ million dollars deposited by Russia in a bank in Zurich, Switzerland, to the account of a U.S. State Department official who was to keep Spain out of the western alliance.

5. Lists of all major Soviet civil and military agents now working in the U.S.

6. Two valises of documents to prove their allegations.

## PHOTO REQUIRED

If the United States agreed, Gallo was to be given a photograph showing him with either

department. I identified myself over the phone to the President or the vice president and J. Edgar Hoover to prove he had talked with them, and given the guarantee.

Gallo insisted that his name be

withheld whether or not the venture was successful. The FBI questioned us six and a half hours, agreed the story was fantastic, but not too fantastic to investigate. Gallo sailed for Spain Aug. 21 aboard the Constitution.

We agreed before he left he would deal only with me to avoid slipups.

He had no picture and no guarantee, only a verbal agreement that we would try to get a guarantee if he could establish personal contact with the fugitives, and tentatively identify them.

## DEMAND REPEATED

I telephoned him at Marbella, Provincia de Malaga, Sept. 16, in answer to a telegram. Two FBI agents were present with a tape recorder, as instructed in the telegram.

There was static in the connection and Gallo had to spell the name. "B," he said. "B, like in Barcelona, e-r-l-a." Then he gave me instructions to carry out in Washington. "Get the guarantee and bring it here."

"Am I to come?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. Then he repeated everything to an FBI agent both in English and in Spanish to be sure we had it right.

## NO AID FORTHCOMING

Washington was notified immediately. The next day the answer came: "The case has been turned over to the State Department."

The next afternoon I was in Washington calling the State Department.

"This is the undersecretary," a man answered. "We were notified you were coming."

"I assumed you would want to talk to me," I said.

"We have nothing to discuss unless you have additional information to add to the file," he said.

I told the story to McCarthy. "I'll go with you, if it will help," he told me.

We set up a new plan. I was to take the documents alone and deliver them if possible, tell the fugitives to wait where they were, and notify McCarthy to negotiate

with the Spanish government for their custody.

I landed in Madrid at 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 21, and went to the Palace Hotel, where Gallo had reserved

rooms. When he failed to appear at midnight as scheduled, I knew something was wrong.

That morning he had assured me when I telephoned him from Paris that he would drive from Malaga (830 miles) that day and meet me at midnight.

## INTERFERENCE

I was in Spain, where Communists are punished with the severest penalties, and agents can be shot for high treason. I was here to deal with one of the most important Communists in the world, if it was really Beria, and without the knowledge of the Spanish secret police. My moonlighting ended at noon.

Accompanied by a policeman, Gallo burst into my room waving his arms.

"The State Department turned me over to the police yesterday," he said.

About noon, Gallo said, a man contacted him at the Miramar Hotel in Malaga and identified

himself with a passport as an American embassy attache. The man told him he was a representative of the U.S. attorney general. "He said, 'Take me to Beria.'"

"I didn't trust the passport and asked him to show more proof. He told me the passport was all he needed," Gallo said. "I asked him to name the attorney general and he told me he was there to ask questions, not answer them. I didn't believe he was really from the embassy," Gallo said.

Gallo said he told the man about me arriving and the man apparently knew nothing of any guarantees.

## COMMISSIONER CALLS

"Then he called a man he said was a secret policeman, and I didn't believe him either," Gallo said. "They wanted me to go with them in a car with four other men. I refused."

Next came the governor's secretary and the local police, then Gallo was taken to the police station, then to the governor, then to Madrid under guard.

The "policeman," a double for Charles Boyer, handed me his card. It said he was the national

commissioner of political police. I asked for his credentials, then showed him the papers I had. They were still in the envelope as I had air-mailed them to myself from Paris to avoid having them on my person.

Within a few minutes I was in the Direccion General de Seguridad (National Police Headquarters) talking to the commissioner's boss, a general, the general secretary, and three commissioners.

## COOPERATION PLEDGED

They assured me I was not under arrest, but they wanted to know what it was all about. I told them the whole works.

When I finished the general offered me his hand. "You shall have the complete cooperation of the Spanish government," he told me. "If we can find this man, you shall deliver your documents and we will hold the men in protective custody until Senator McCarthy can come get them."

Sept. 26 was a Saturday and more strange things happened. Gallo was to drive to Gohzola Gohzueta's farm at Marbella to make arrangements for me to

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FIRST DETAILED STORY

# 'Beria' Hunt Upset By Crossed Signals

CPYRGHT

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wait there for the interview with the man who claimed to be Beria. They said only that they had seen the three men walking on the beach, between Sept. 18 and 21, and looked him over closely when he passed because it was strange to them that anyone would be walking on such a remote beach.

A second trip to Malaga Oct. 12 proved nothing more than the first. Outwardly, Gallo appeared there alone, but he was closely watched. Gallo was returned to Madrid.

## STATEMENT OF 6 TAKEN

When I left Madrid, Oct. 20, the commissioner was beginning the long job of taking statements from the six witnesses. They are all quite wealthy and highly respected Spaniards. He didn't think it was very probable that they actually had a hand in the business as anything more than bystanders. But he had an order to get to the truth.

In my last interview with the general, he assured me that if the three men can be located in Spain, they will be turned over to Senator McCarthy, if he is still interested. The commissioner was preparing a complete and detailed report for McCarthy on everything that happened.

## FRIENDS 'IMPLICATED'

The commissioner reasoned that Gallo's friends or relatives were mixed up in the case and were afraid of being involved in a case concerning Communists. He thought it was possible they had threatened Gallo. We returned to Madrid and the investigation continued in Malaga.

Gallo told the police he had actually contacted the fugitives the afternoon of Sept. 16 in Gibraltar.

Gallo described the man he met and identified authentic pictures of the real Beria as the man he talked to in the car.

Gallo told in great detail how he arranged a second meeting for Sept. 18, then returned to Gonzolo Goizueta's farm, 40 miles from Gibraltar on the road to Malaga, to meet the man called Beria at the farm.

Gallo's statement implicated six other persons besides himself who were at the farm. He said the other six had seen the three fugitives walking on the beach near the farmhouse.

## A VISIT TO THE FARM

I visited the farm. The "farmhouse" is an 80-room mansion built on the beach and hidden from the highway by a tall line of eucalyptus trees and 600 acres of cornfields. The farm is located on an isolated section of coast midway between Gibraltar and Malaga, 45 miles by boat from Africa.

The six persons were questioned. They were Gonzolo Goizueta, Gonzolo's brother, his sister, his mother-in-law, and her two daughters. All selected the photograph of the group pictures taken in Russia. They denied

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